

BAYFIELD COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING

EOC

July 23, 2020

Board Members Present: Jim Crandall, Larry Fickbohm, Susan Rosa, Jeremy Oswald, Lona Schmidt, Marty Milanowski, Kent Seldal

Board Members Absent: David Zepczyk, Stephanie Haskins

Others Present: Elizabeth Skulan, Jeanine Spuhler, Cheryl Hanson, Nikki Revak, Sarah Traaholt

Call to Order and Introductions

Crandall called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Discussion and Possible Action - Review of the June 25, 2020, Meeting Minutes

Motion by Milanowski, seconded by Schmidt, to approve the June 25, 2020 minutes as presented. Motion passed.

Opportunity for Public Comment (Limited to 3 minutes per person)

none

Program Presentation – Indian Child Welfare, Gretchen Morris, Director, Indian Child Welfare, Red Cliff Tribe – Due to an unanticipated emergency, Morris was unable to present.

Monthly Section Reports and COVID19 Updates

Support Services –Nikki Revak

Supplied each employee with a face shield, cloth masks, and hand sanitizer. Paper masks are available for the public. Each section has disinfectant and cleaning supplies. Small plexiglass shields are available to check out in each section for face-to-face meetings. Larger plexiglass shields are available in each conference room. Suite B was rearranged to safely distance staff.

Working on Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) financials. The reporting workload reporting has increased as the State added sixteen new profiles.

One of the DHS fleet vehicles had issues with air conditioning after an accident. Repairs were made by Ashland Ford.

New furniture has been ordered for the Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) offices.

Revak spoke briefly to the Board regarding a proposal to develop a Maintenance and Grounds Committee and to also identify dedicated staff to attend to the repair and maintenance of all county fleet vehicles. Having these tasks done by employees in each department is not as efficient as having centralized service. The current system assigns the tasks to staff who often lack the skills required to easily perform them.

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Economic Support – Jeanine Spuhler

Public assistance program rules were temporarily modified to afford program participants eligible for BadgerCare the same medical resources they had pre-COVID without disruption. Families were also provided the maximum monthly foodshare allowance allowed per household without regard the amount they should have received based on their monthly income. The additional federal unemployment did affect some of the households eligibility. Breaks are starting to come off and renewals and recertifications are starting back up.

Public service commission extended the moratorium to September 1 for utility bills. Economic Support has been busy with calls for utility disconnections. Crisis funds are still available, working to see if more can be obtained. Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) launched an online application process and will start advertising on the County website and with area vendors.

Aging & Disability Services – Elizabeth Skulan (for Carrie Linder)

Grab and Go meals have been served weekly in the Iron River and Port Wing communities since mid-June. Over 140 people have been served over 500 meals in 5 weeks. We will continue to offer them through August and monitor the impact.

Linder participated in various trainings including The Pandemic and People with Mental Illness, Maintaining Social Connection during COVID-19 and Inclusion and Service Provision with the LGBTQ+.

Linder participated in a quarterly meeting jointly with Ashland County staff for the Birth to Three Program. We struggle with a lack of therapy providers and an Early Childhood Educator. Met with GWAAR Family Caregiver Specialist Jane Mahoney to review expenditures of the National Family Caregiver Program funding. It is challenging for caregivers to find paid support and difficult to think of allowing support in the home during the pandemic. We problem solved additional ways to support caregivers, including adding support to grandparents raising grandchildren.

Linder worked with Jenise Swartley, assistant with CORE Community Resources on various activities related to the Transportation Coordinating Committee. The inaugural meeting will be held remotely on August 4.

Working on a larger mailing of the Living Well newsletter with the intention of reaching additional individuals who may be struggling and need additional support.

Practiced social distancing in the Boundary Waters for 5 days. Nothing but loons, fish and mosquitos.

Family Services Manager, Cheryl Hanson

Wednesday, July 8th the Family Services Advisory Committee (FSAC) met via teleconference. Foster Care Coordinator Stacy Schmidt presented a brief overview of out of home placements

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in Bayfield County. Staffing changes were reported; there has been an increase in child protection reports, as well as increases in involuntary behavioral health hospitalizations, and Youth Justice issues. The next FSAC meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2020 at 4:30.

On Monday, July 27, 2020 two new CCS employees will be reporting to work. Tom Croteau is the new CCS Manager/Mental Health Professional and Natali Fellows is a Service Facilitator.

Family Specialist, Presley Nuutinen, started on June 22, 2020. Nuutinen works under the direction of Child Protective Services Social Workers and with Bayfield County families whose children are in danger of being removed from the home and families who are trying to reunify with their children who have been removed.

Monthly Reports

Monthly reports reviewed and placed on file.

- A. Financial
- B. Training (travel is restricted, no training report)

2021 Budget DHS Budget Process and Timing – Review

The 2021 Budget is due to the County Administrator on Thursday, August 20, 2020. The budget will be submitted as required. However, the DHS Board will not review and approve the budget until the next regular monthly meeting on August 27, 2020. The County Administrator is aware of the date discrepancy and will delay releasing the DHS budget until the committee has had an opportunity to review, make changes if necessary, and approve the document.

CCS Update – Update on new CCS offices and staff

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, Human Services is excited to welcome CCS Supervisor/Mental Health Professional Tom Croteau to the team on Monday, July 27, 2020. Tom will be taking over the administration of the CCS program and will supervise the CCS staff. Duane Majeres' position will be reduced from full-time to a half-time no later than August 17, 2020.

One CCS staff is currently on an unanticipated leave of absence. This has been a hardship for both the program and its participants.

Billing for March through June for services is down significantly for both CCS staff and all third-party vendors. This is both due to the pandemic and turnover in DHS staff.

The CCS office remodeling is complete. However, due to issues with the supply chain, the furniture and equipment has been delayed. As a result, the offices will not be ready before new staffs' first day.

COVID19 Department Update – Review of current status, staff, and programs

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The regular monthly meeting of the DHS Board was held on Thursday, July 23, 2020, via Teams. All meetings will continue to be conducted remotely via Teams until further notice.

COVID19 safety measures, personal protective equipment, procedures, reporting, and continuity of change were discussed.

All departments have been asked to create a contingency plan in the event of an increase in positive cases, community spread, exposure to staff; and/or inability to work remotely due to COVID19. Input from committee members is welcome.

Face to face meetings remain limited to only those that are necessary or mandated. Travel outside of the area is still prohibited.

DHS Advisory Committee Openings - Family Services Advisory Committee, to fill vacancy left by Susan Davis

There is still a vacancy on the Family Services Advisory Committee. Kylie Vadnais from Bayfield has expressed interest in the vacancy and has applied. Cheryl Hanson has been trying to contact Kylie, but has been unsuccessful to date.

Other (Informational Items)

- A. Home Energy Assistance thank you note

Future Meetings

- A. August 27, 2020
- B. September 24, 2020
- C. October 22, 2020

Adjournment at 4:52 p.m.

Submitted by Sarah Traaholt, Clerk III